

Space Heater Safety

Overview

Homeowners typically use small space heaters when central heating is too costly to operate, or the primary heating system is inadequate. However, space heaters lack efficiency and have significant fire and safety hazards that must be addressed and controlled.



The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission [estimates that portable heaters, including electric space heaters](#), are associated with more than 1,700 fires annually, resulting in an average of 80 deaths and 160 injuries. Space heaters have a greater risk of causing a fire compared to central heating systems such as furnaces. Due to safety concerns, we recommend prohibiting the use of space heaters on all housing properties.

Safety Tips

Adhere to the following safety precautions if residents and employees are allowed to use space heaters on the properties:

- Only buy space heaters tested and labeled by a nationally recognized testing company, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Always place the space heater on a level, secure, and non-flammable surface.



- Keep the space heater at least 3 feet (36 inches) away from anything that can burn, including drapes and furniture.
- Always plug the space heater directly into an outlet with enough capacity. Do not use an extension cord.
- Never leave the space heater on if you leave your home or while you are asleep.
- Keep all children and pets away from space heaters.
- Do not place the power cord for the space heater in an area that can result in slips, trips, or falls.
- Ensure all smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are functioning at all times.



Additional Resources:

[NFPA — Candle Safety](#)

[National Candle Association — Fire Safety and Candles](#)

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